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**From:** Karinotes@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2009 2:29 PM  
**To:** Williams, Catrice (DTC)  
**Subject:** Verizon Inquiry

February 21, 2009

Dear Secretary Catrice C. Williams,

I live in Western Massachusetts and am writing to urge you to launch an inquiry into the poor quality of phone service that Verizon provides. Before moving to the Town of Leverett two years ago, I lived in many different parts of the country and have NEVER experienced a total loss of service for long periods of time like this, with such a negligent response from a phone company.

Just in the past year, I have lost service more than six times, with each incident lasting at least a few days. In March 2008, my phone service went out and was not restored for a week, despite frequent calls to Verizon. In that instance, Verizon representatives kept ensuring they would fix the problem the next day, until a week had passed and no one had even come out to check it. When a repairman finally did arrive, he said the problem is that all these lines are at least 40 or 50 years old and the issues will never be resolved until the lines are replaced. I had a similar week-long outage in January.

Not only was this a huge inconvenience to my business, since I largely work out of my home, but it was a security issue as well since there is no cellular phone coverage in this area. I'm not alone; all of my neighbors have reported similar occurrences. And, since high-speed/broadband Internet is not offered in this area, any disruption in phone service means that those of us who live here are completely cut off from the rest of the world. The continued poor quality and sometimes total loss of phone service, is affecting people in these towns in so many ways.

Even when my neighbors and I do have phone service, it is rarely a clear connection. Most of the time, there is a loud crackling sound on the line, and often a tremendous roar that is so loud that conversations cannot be heard and dial-up Internet connections (our only choice) can't be made. The "crackling" sound is so noisy that my answering machine now records calls in which someone does not speak, but hangs up, because the machine registers the "crackling" and roar as someone speaking.

Occasional phone issues are to be expected. But this level of service is appalling and, no matter how many times I've now had to call Verizon to report outages, I'm still shocked by how long it takes the company to respond and attempt to repair a problem. Taking a week or more to respond to a total lack of service is not acceptable. Verizon must take this matter seriously and increase their level of service and decrease the response time.

Thank you, in advance, for looking into this matter. I very much appreciate your time and efforts on this as it is very important to the people who live here. Please let me know if you would like further information; I have records on the interruptions to my phone service for the past year.

Best Regards,  
Kari Ridge  
Leverett, Massachusetts 01054

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